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LETTER DATED 18 OCTOBER 1995 FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON THE COMMITTEE ON RELATIONS WITH THE HOST COUNTRY ADDRESSED TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON RELATIONS WITH THE HOST COUNTRY

The United States Mission wishes to address for the record certain unfounded allegations by the Permanent Representative of Cuba in connection with an invitation from the City of San Francisco to participate in ceremonies commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations. In this respect, I would like to reiterate the remarks on this subject made by the United States delegation at the 172nd meeting of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country on 22 September 1995.

The host country takes very seriously its obligations under the Headquarters Agreement not to impose any impediments "to transit to or from the Headquarters district" and is scrupulous in implementing this provision so that representatives of all Member States may be able to participate in official meetings of the United Nations. However, it is important not to blur the distinction between privately sponsored and official United Nations functions. The United States will continue to take seriously and honour its obligations with regard to official meetings of the United Nations. The restrictions imposed on the Cuban representative in San Francisco in no way violated our treaty obligations as host country.

Events in San Francisco commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations were hosted by the City of San Francisco and not officially convened by the United Nations. Although the host country has no obligation to permit travel to private events, in keeping with the spirit of the fiftieth anniversary, the Permanent Representative of Cuba was permitted to participate in all City of San Francisco-sponsored events. Since these City of San Francisco-sponsored events were ceremonial, not substantive, authorization to travel to this non-official event was granted only to the Permanent Representative.

Travel to any event not sponsored by the City of San Francisco or outside a radius of 25 miles from the hotel was not anticipated when permission was granted for the Permanent Representative of Cuba to travel from New York to San Francisco. When the issue of attending an event sponsored by a private individual at his residence approximately 40 miles outside San Francisco was raised, the Permanent Mission of Cuba was verbally informed that this non-city-sponsored event was not included in the travel authorization previously granted. When it was requested that this decision be provided in writing, an annotated copy of the State Department form approving Ambassador Rodriguez Parrilla's travel to San Francisco was personally presented to him in San Francisco. These administrative procedures regarding State Department forms cannot be construed as tampering with Cuban Mission property, as alleged.

The United States Government remains committed to continue to honour and fulfil its obligations as host country to the United Nations Headquarters and will continue to respect official travel by or on behalf of the United Nations.

My delegation requests that the present letter be circulated as a document of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

(Signed) Victor MARRERO